

Supplementary Papers

The Future Oxfordshire Partnership

held in the The Long Room, Oxford City Council, Town Hall, St Aldate's,
Oxford, OX1 1BX
on Tuesday, 26 September 2023 at 1.30 pm

3. **Public participation** (Pages 2 to 4)

Attached is the Partnership's response to questions asked by Mr George Curtis at the meeting held on 26 September 2023

4. **Future Oxfordshire Partnership Scrutiny Panel update** (Pages 5-9)

Two separate responses are attached:

- The response of the Partnership to the recommendations of the Panel
- The response of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership to the Panel's recommendations relating to the draft Strategic Economic Plan

Public speakers

26 September 2023

1. George Curtis on behalf of Bioabundance

The Draft Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), August 2023, fails to prioritise the over-riding need for policies to minimise carbon emissions and to measure properly our progress towards future wellbeing and sustainability. Oxfordshire is one of the most nature-depleted counties in the country. We live in one of the most unequal counties; there is a 15 year difference in male life expectancy and a 30% child poverty rate in Oxford. The LEP economic growth agenda is incompatible with addressing these or the urgent transition to zero carbon.

The SEP Introduction includes '*There is, in particular, heightened awareness of the imperatives surrounding a transition to net zero carbon, and its urgency....there has been increasing recognition that – in and of itself – economic growth (usually measured in terms of gross value added (GVA)) is both unsatisfactory as an indicator of effective local prosperity and flawed as a statement of purpose.*' And yet 'Economic Growth' (presumably GVA measured?) takes precedence over 'Sustainability' in much of the rest of the report.

There is no framework within the SEP to balance the complexities and sometimes competing priorities set out in the 10 Strategies. Zero carbon will only be achieved if the PaZCO predominates over the other nine Oxfordshire Strategies. The economic plan for Oxfordshire in the 2020's must show how the restoration of nature will be managed. Delivery of aspirations based on productivity alone focuses on employment and innovation; and fails on the environmental and societal goals of the Oxfordshire Vision.

The overriding principles of wellbeing and zero carbon disappear in the SEP section on Measuring Progress. There is an opportunity here for Oxfordshire to set a globally relevant example to complement our ambitions as global centre for innovation and energy technology. Our opportunity is to use 21st C economic principles to measure progress towards the twelve 'Social Foundations' identified by the UN; and how we keep within nine Ecological Ceilings. The Introduction to the SEP report states, '*In this context, insights have been drawn from Doughnut Economics and its vision of an ecologically safe and socially just space in which humanity can thrive.*' Here is a readymade methodology for Oxfordshire to lead the way in changing our purpose from growing to thriving, to guide our decision making to balance environmental and social goals, both locally and globally.

It is our view that Oxfordshire's Councils should support a Strategic Economic Partnership for Oxfordshire (Oxon StEP). This partnership should be multisector, for a multi stakeholder community and be place-based. It would connect the existing activity and networks in Oxfordshire for the common purpose of generating an economic strategy that meets everyone's needs within the means of our living planet.

We are concerned that the FOP members are only to 'take note' of the LEP report. Who has the authority to re-direct this very important Strategic plan to encompass 21st C Economics?

We are concerned that those of our local politicians who are directors of the LEP board have a conflict of interest between supporting this LEP as it is, and discharging their duties as our elected representatives to plan for the wellbeing of future generations.

Questions to put to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership:

1. What further evidence of climate change do our decision makers need to justify setting the wellbeing of future generations as the over-riding top priority in the SEP?

Answer

The Partnership fully appreciates the importance of addressing climate change to future generations and agrees that should be taken into account by OxLEP in the drafting of the Strategic Economic Plan.

2. What legal and material influence does the SEP have on Local Plans?

Answer

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has content on this point. The NPPF, which is guidance and not legislation, requires Local Plans to set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, having regard to Local Industrial Strategies and other local policies for economic development and regeneration. In this context new Local Plans in Oxfordshire will need to have regard to the Strategic Economic Plan when it is finalised.

3. Why is the SEP being rushed through for adoption by OxLEP in advance of the central government changes to LEP funding and devolution of responsibility for Strategic Economic Plans to Local Authorities?

Answer

The Strategic Economic Plan process led by OxLEP commenced in February 2023 supported by SQW with a review of existing strategies followed by an open call for evidence, stakeholder interviews, and 7 public ½ day workshops held across the county between March and June. It has been supported throughout by a senior officer working group with representatives drawn from all Oxfordshire Local Authorities, Universities, FE College engagement and Government representation. Following the workshops and evidence gathering process, OxLEP's consultants SQW prepared a first working draft in August and then following initial comment from the Officer working group prepared Version 2 which was circulated to all stakeholders, OXLEP Board and Sub-Groups, FOP and FOP Scrutiny, all registered workshop participants, Business Representative Organisations and MPs on the 12/13th September. Following consideration at Board and now FOP, OxLEP will review any further comments during October and early November before preparing a final draft for consideration at the OXLEP Board in December.

4. How will Local Authorities and the FOP take advantage of the opportunity in April 2024 for local leadership and local residents to determine their own economic strategies rather than defer to the vested interests of business-led OxLEP?

Answer

Guidance for the integration of LEP functions into local authorities was issued during August 2023 and the development of the future model for the delivery of current LEP functions is at an early stage of development. The August guidance stated that further specific guidance on business representation and local economic planning will be issued by January 2024.

Future Oxfordshire Partnership response to recommendations of the Partnership Scrutiny Panel made on 14 September 2023

The Future Oxfordshire Partnership is requested to provide a response to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel for decision at its meeting on 26 September 2023.

Recommendation	Comment
<p><u>Housing and Growth Deal: Update at the end of Quarter 1 2023/2024</u></p> <p>The Panel noted that as of Quarter 1, the Housing from Infrastructure programme was over profiled by £2.650m compared to available funding. Whilst acknowledging that a bid for additional funding to Homes England had been in respect of the Lodge Hill scheme, the Panel was concerned about the possible negative effect to the overall programme if this bid was not successful. Schemes at Lodge Hill, Banbury Road roundabout in Bicester, and Former RAF Upper Heyford M40 Junction 10 improvements were specifically raised as potentially at risk in this eventuality.</p> <p>The Panel felt that it was important that there be constant communication and discussion between Oxfordshire County Council as the authority responsible for the delivery of the Housing from Infrastructure Programme and the districts, about the status of the programme and any potential changes to individual schemes, noting that the County Council had agreed to undertake this as part of the revisions to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Terms of Reference.</p>	

<p>It was also felt that a ‘lessons learnt’ exercise should be completed at the conclusion of the programme.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Future Oxfordshire Partnership reiterate the continued importance of on-going discussions and communications between Oxfordshire County Council (the responsible authority for the Housing from Infrastructure Programme) and the districts about the status of the programme and any potential amendments as agreed in the Partnership’s Terms of Reference and Memorandum of Understanding. 2. That the Future Oxfordshire Partnership commit to undertake a full ‘lessons learnt’ review of the Homes from Infrastructure Programme on its conclusion. 	<p>Agreed. As highlighted by the Panel, this is the expectation as set out in the Partnership’s Terms of Reference and Memorandum of Association and good communication and discussion processes are in place. These will be diligently maintained through out the lifespan of the Housing from Infrastructure programme.</p> <p>Agreed. Whether the review would most appropriately sit within the Partnership’s governance structures, potentially through the Infrastructure Advisory Group, or through those of the County Council as the responsible authority will need to be carefully considered in due course.</p>
<p><u>Refreshing the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic plan</u> The Panel welcomed the opportunity to comment on the Strategic Economic Plan, (SEP) draft v2. However, whilst acknowledging the timetabling constraints faced by OxLEP, the panel was disappointed to have received the draft only approximately two days before the meeting.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. That the Future Oxfordshire Partnership be recommended to not endorse or note the Strategic Economic Plan document, recognising that it is an OxLEP document not one with local authority ownership. 4. That the Future Oxfordshire Partnership include the following feedback to OxLEP if it is minded to note the draft Strategic Economic Plan: 	<p>Noted, the paper and draft SEP is shared for information and comment by FOP, not endorsement.</p> <p>The FOP noted the comments from the Scrutiny Panel and forwarded recommendations 4a to 4e to OxLEP for it to respond to the Panel directly.</p>

- a. Measurements metrics and key performance indicators, (KPIs) within the document need to be linked to and be consistent with the delivery of the nine Oxfordshire Strategic Vision objectives and defined within a range of possible outcomes to achieve truly system wide effects. There is also the need for the collection of disaggregated data where relevant based on gender, ethnicity, age and disability status, to ensure inclusion of different groups of people.
- b. That the Strategic Economic Plan should prioritise sustainable growth, the environment and the health and wellbeing of residents. The metrics and measures the SEP uses to determine its own success should broadly reflect these areas. In practice, this lends itself to a wider set of measurements than are represented in the current draft.
- c. That the document needs to strike a balance between job creation and provision of homes in a way that is environmentally sustainable.
- d. That communication about the plan needs to be framed in the context of economic growth that is sustainable. This could be linked to an approach based on the principles of Doughnut Economics.
- e. That the language within the document be double checked to ensure that it is consistent, (use of 'we' defined etc) and to ensure it does not give the impression that the Plan was encroaching on matters within the purview of the democratically determined Local Plan process or matters within the scope of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.

OxLEP response attached as a separate document.

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OxLEP response to recommendations of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Scrutiny Panel made on 14 September 2023

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Refreshing the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic plan

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 - a. Measurements metrics and key performance indicators, (KPIs) within the document need to be linked to and be consistent with the delivery of the nine Oxfordshire Strategic Vision objectives and defined within a range of possible outcomes to achieve truly system wide effects. There is also the need for the collection of disaggregated data where relevant based on gender, ethnicity, age and disability status, to ensure inclusion of different groups of people.
 - b. That the Strategic Economic Plan should prioritise sustainable growth, the environment and the health and

Noted, OXLEP are not asking the FOP to endorse, the paper and draft SEP is shared for information and comment.

As we (OXLEP) reflected in the panel discussion, we are developing a range of indicators to support the monitoring and evaluation of the SEP. It should be noted that the FOP does not have metrics or indicators identified to monitor the Vision, the 9 Objectives and guiding principles and reports more generally on progress. As such we will work with the FOP Executive to identify common metrics to avoid inconsistency.

<p>wellbeing of residents. The metrics and measures the SEP uses to determine its own success should broadly reflect these areas. In practice, this lends itself to a wider set of measurements than are represented in the current draft.</p> <p>c. That the document needs to strike a balance between job creation and provision of homes in a way that is environmentally sustainable.</p> <p>d. That communication about the plan needs to be framed in the context of economic growth that is sustainable. This could be linked to an approach based on the principles of Doughnut Economics.</p> <p>e. That the language within the document be double checked to ensure that it is consistent, (use of ‘we’ defined etc) and to ensure it does not give the impression that the Plan was encroaching on matters within the purview of the democratically determined Local Plan process or matters within the scope of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership.</p>	<p>Noted, OXLEP believe the SEP draft Version 2 does address all of these issues and we are developing out monitoring metrics, noting the response to item “a.” above.</p> <p>The plan responds to and sits within the Local Authority led Local Plan process and as such its ambitions and scale is framed by the respective employment and housing growth parameters set.</p> <p>Noted, the plan is framed within the current national policy landscape, has sustainability embedded and recognises that economic growth must be framed within Local Plan ambitions. We (OXLEP) have acknowledged that many of the principles of Doughnut Economics are consistent with for instance our productivity focus, improving resource efficiency and output rather than focusing upon increased employment numbers.</p> <p>Noted, we will review, but as made clear in the presentation and discussion, all local authorities have been actively involved in the development, evidence gathering and drafting of the SEP. The “we” in respect of the endorsement/approval process refers to the OXLEP Board.</p>
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